

BOOK REVIEW

Attitude 101

by Dr. John C. Maxwell

reviewed by Joseph C. Piff

Attitude 101 is one of a series of four short “101” books by Dr. John C. Maxwell. This book contains few surprises and little detail. However, the hard, soul searching questions are all there. The book is designed to give you a quick, easily read course in the essentials of attitude – yours and your team’s.

Although the book is short, Dr. Maxwell divides it into three Parts: The Impact of Attitude, The Formation of Attitude, and The Future with the Right Attitude. The first part defines the impact of attitude on the individual and on the leader. The second part describes the origin of a person’s attitude and what can be done to change your attitude. Finally, in Part 3 Dr. Maxwell defines failure and success in relation to a person’s attitude and what they mean in a leader’s life.

In Part 1 we find that attitude is always a member of the team, that good and bad attitudes are contagious, and that your attitude and your potential are strongly related. A fact is revealed in Chapter 2 that scientists and engineers need to keep in mind: a research study found that the money an individual makes in any endeavor is determined 12.5% by knowledge and 87.5% by the individual’s ability to deal with people. And not surprisingly, our attitude determines our ability to deal with people.

In Part 2, we find that “The key to having a good attitude is the willingness to change.” Dr. Maxwell also states that he believes “that environment is a greater controlling factor in our attitude development than our personality or other inherited traits.” From our environment, we gain our beliefs and, whether right or wrong, our attitude is reinforced by our beliefs. The attitudes we develop during the beginning period of our lives are the most difficult to change. We usually act in direct response to our self-image. And exposure to new experiences provides the opportunity for growth.

I see Part 3 as applying what we have learned to our life. Dr. Maxwell is very careful to separate failure of the activity from failure as a human being. In fact, he specifically states that we must fail: “The only way you can get ahead is to fail early, fail often, and fail forward.” Learn from adversity. Then, define success correctly. “Success is ... Knowing your purpose in life, Growing to reach you maximum potential, and Sowing seeds that benefit others.” Take the journey, expect to have to make sacrifices, and enjoy each day BECAUSE you have an attitude of success.